

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 AID-05 CU-02 MCT-01 SY-05 /074 W  
-----017174 301326Z /45

R 301100Z JUL 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3055  
INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO  
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRASILIA 6358

EO 11652 GDS  
TAGS PINT BR  
SUBJECT: UNIVERSITY OF BRASILIA OCCUPIED BY POLICE UPON REOPENING

REF: RIO DE JANEIRO 3531

1. SUMMARY. THE UNIVERSITY OF BRASILIA, OCCUPIED BY MILITARY AND FEDERAL POLICE SINCE ITS JULY 25 REOPENING AFTER AN EXTRA-ORDINARY 32-DAY RECESS, REMAINS LARGELY DEVOID OF STUDENTS. POLICE ARRESTED AND QUICKLY RELEASED APPROXIMATELY 150 STUDENTS WHO TRIED TO HOLD AN ASSEMBLY EARLIER IN THE WEEK TO PROTEST THE SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF 64 UNB PUPILS FOR THEIR ROLE IN THE MAY-JUNE STRIKE. ANOTHER FOURTEEN STUDENTS ARRESTED ON JULY 26-27 ARE STILL BEING HELD AND FACE CHARGES UNDER THE NATIONAL SECURITY LAW (LWN). UNB APPEARS HEADED FOR ANOTHER, PERHAPS LONGER, RECESS WHILE STUDENTS IN OTHER BRAZILIAN UNIVERSITITES, WHICH REOPEN MONDAY AUGUST 1 AFTER THEIR NORMAL JULY RECESS, ARE PREPARING ASSEMBLIES TO PROTEST THE ABNORMAL SITUATION AND ARRESTS AT UNB. END SUMMARY.

2. THE UNIVERSITY OF BRASILIA, OCCUPIED BY APPROXIMATELY 200 UNIFORMED AND PLAINSCLOTHES MILITARY AND FEDERAL POLICE SINCE ITS REOPENING ON JULY 25, WAS CALM AT WEEK'S END. THE LARGE MAJORITY  
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OF THE UNIVERSITY'S 11,000 STUDENTS WERE AVOIDING THE CAMPUS AND AVERAGE CLASS ATTENDANCE WAS RUNNING WELL BELOW 25 PERCENT. THE RECTOR HAS STATED THAT THE POLICE WILL BE MAINTAINED ON CAMPUS UNTIL THE SITUATION RETURNS TO "NORMAL" AND HAS INDICATED THAT HE IS PREPARED TO RECESS UNB FOR THE REST OF THE CALENDAR YEAR IF HE DEEMS IT NECESSARY.

3. FACED WITH A WIDELY-SUPPORTED STUDENT STRIKE AND INCREASING TENSION ON CAMPUS, UNB RECTOR JOSE CARLOS AZEVEDO DECLARED AN EXTRAORDINARY 32-DAY RECESS LAST JUNE 22. AT THE TIME, THE RECTOR STATED THAT THE RECESS'S PURPOSE WAS TO ALLOW FOR A COOLING-OFF PERIOD, AN EXPLANATION WHICH WAS SEEMINGLY SUPPORTED BY THE UNEXPECTED RELEASE ON JULY 16 OF NINE UNB STUDENTS ARRESTED DURING THE JUNE STRIKE AND CHARGED UNDER ARTICLE 45 OF THE LSN (DISCUSSION OF LEGAL BASIS FOR ACTIONS AGAINST STUDENTS FOLLOWS SEPTTEL). TWO DAYS LATER, HOWEVER, BASING HIS ACTIONS ENTIRELY ON INTERNAL UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS, THE RECTOR EXPELLED 30 STUDENTS (INCLUDING THE NINE JUST RELEASED) AND SUSPENDED ANOTHER 34 FOR THEIR ROLES IN ORGANIZING THE NATIONWIDE MAY 19 DEMONSTRATIONS COMMEMORATING

THE "NATIONAL DAY OF STRUGGLE" (BRASILIA 4205). NOTING THAT UNB WAS THE ONLY BRAZILIAN UNIVERSITY TO PUNISH ITS PUPILS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE MAY 19 DEMONSTRATIONS, THE UNB CENTRAL STUDENTS DIRECTORY (DCE) ISSUED A PUBLIC LETTER IN PROTEST AND ANNOUNCED IT WAS CALLING AN ASSEMBLY OF UNB STUDENTS ON THE MORNING OF JULY 25, THE FIRST DAY OF CLASSES AFTER THE RECESS. AT THE SAME TIME, A PRESIDENTIAL PALACE SOURCE COMMENTED THAT THE PUNISHMENTS WERE THE MINIMUM NECESSARY, LEADING SOME TO SUSPECT THAT THEY HAD IN FACT BEEN ORDERED BY PRESIDENT GEISEL, LONG KNOWN FOR MAKING DECISIONS ON EVEN THE SMALLEST MATTERS.

4. THIS SUSPICION HARDENED WHEN ESTADO COLUMNIST CAROLS CHAGAS REPORTED ON JULY 21 THAT UNB WOULD BE OCCUPIED BY POLICE WHEN IT

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REOPENED ON THE 25TH, AND THAT, FURTHERMORE, THE DECISION TO DO THIS HAD BEEN MADE PERSONALLY BY PRESIDENT GEISEL. DESPITE DENIALS BY PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESMAN CAMARGO, EDUCATION MINISTER NEY BRAGA AND RECTOR AZEVEDO, THE POLICE DID IN FACT OCCUPY THE CAMPUS ON THE MORNING OF JULY 25. THEIR PRESENCE WAS REQUESTED BY THE RECTOR, SUPPOSEDLY ACTING IN RESPONSE TO A FEDERAL JUDGE'S ORDER TO TAKE ALL NECESSARY MEASURES, INCLUDING FORCE, TO ENSURE THAT ANY STUDENTS WHO WISHED TO ATTEND CLASSES WOULD NOT BE IMPEDED BY THEIR COLLEAGUES. THE JUDGE'S ORDER, ISSUED JULY 25, CAME AS A RESULT OF A SUIT BROUGHT THAT SAME DAY BY SOME 15 TO 20 UNIDENTIFIED UNB STUDENTS REQUESTING THAT THE RECTOR BE ORDERED TO GUARANTEE THEIR FREE ACCESS TO CLASSES. THE LEGAL BASIS FOR THE SUIT WAS SOMEWHAT CONFUSING--THE STUDENTS ACTUALLY PETITIONED FOR AND RECEIVED A WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS AGAINST THE RECTOR TO ASSURE THEIR FREEDOM TO ATTEND CLASSES--AND IT WAS UNIVERSALLY ASSUMED TO BE A COVER FOR THE PREVIOUSLY-MADE DECISION TO OCCUPY THE CAMPUS.

5. WHEN ON THE MORNING OF JULY 25 SOME 800 STUDENTS ATTEMPTED TO HOLD THEIR PREVIOUSLY-ANNOUNCED ASSEMBLY,

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BRASILIA 6358

BETWEEN 150 AND 200 (NUMBERS VARY ACCORDING TO SOURCES) WERE ARRESTED, AND THEN RELEASED WITHIN EIGHT HOURS. INCLUDED WERE TWO DAUGHTERS OF MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION, THREE CHILDREN OF SPECIAL ADVISOR TO EDUCATION MINISTER, AND SONS OF SENATORS CATETE PINHEIRO (ARENA) AND MARCOS FREIRE (MDB), AS WELL AS FOUR ACCREDITED JOURNALISTS. SMALLER NUMBERS OF STUDENTS WERE ARRESTED IN FOLLOWING DAYS; MOST WERE QUICKLY RELEASED BUT 14, WHO GOVERNMENT ALLEGES WERE INVOLVED IN PREVIOUS STUDENT DISTURBANCES, ARE STILL BEING HELD INCOMMUNICADO (LEGAL UNDER BRAZILIAN LAW) AND HAVE BEEN CHARGED UNDER THE LSN.

6. THE OCCUPATION OF UNB AND ARRESTS HAVE BEEN WIDELY CONDEMNED, AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN OTHER CITIES ARE PREPARING PROTESTS WHEN THEIR SCHOOLS REOPEN AUGUST 1, TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE RECONVENING OF CONGRESS' FIRST WORKING SESSION ON AUGUST 3-TWO DAYS LATE OUT OF RESPECT FOR TWO RECENTLY DECEASED MEMBERS: SENATORS RUY CARNEIRO (MDB-PARAIBA) AND PAULO GUERRA (ARENA-PERNAMBUCO). SENATOR MAROCOS FREIRE BLAMED THE RECTOR'S INTRANSIGENCE FOR THE STUDENTS' ACTIONS, SAYING THAT "THE MANIFESTATIONS IN THE STUDENT SECTOR ARE IN LARGE PART A REFLECTION OF COLLECTIVE NATIONAL DISSATISFACTION AND THE GREATER CRISIS WHICH THE COUNTRY IS UNDERGOING." SURPRISINGLY, CATETE PINHEIRO SUPPORTED HIS SON AND OTHER ARRESTED STUDENTS, CONDEMNING THE ARRESTS, SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS AS

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COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE AND CALLING THE STUDENT ACTIONS "THE NATURAL MANIFESTATIONS OF THEIR DESIRE FOR STRUCTURAL REFORMS SUITED

TO CHANGES IN THE REST OF THE WORLD." THE BRAZILIAN PRESS ASSOCIATION PROTESTED THE ARREST OF THE FOUR JOURNALISTS, AND A GROUP OF 1330 PERSONS, CALLING THEMSELVES INTELLECTUALS, JOURNALISTS, PROFESSORS AND PARENTS, CONDEMNED THE ARRESTS AND PRESENCE OF POLICE ON CAMPUS IN AN OPEN LETTER TO THE RECTOR. ACCORDING TO ESTADO, PROFESSORS FROM TEN UNB DEPARTMENTS SENT A LETTER TO THE RECTOR SAYING THAT "THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF NORMAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES WITH THE PRESENCE OF POLICE ON CAMPUS."

7. FOLLOWING ITS NORMAL CUSTOM, THE GOVERNMENT FORBADE ANY MENTION OF THE UNB SITUATION ON RADIO OR TELEVISION. MORE UNUSUAL WAS THE ALMOST COMPLETE ABSENCE SINCE JULY 27 OF ANY UNB COVERAGE IN THE BRASILIA NEWSPAPERS. SAO PAULO'S ESTADO WAS CRITICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION, NOTING THAT 32-DAY RECESS WAS FIRST SINCE EARLY DAYS OF THE REVOLUTION AND EDITORIALY SPECULATING THAT GEISEL WAS BEHIND THE DECISION TO SEND POLICE ON CAMPUS. RIO'S JORNAL DO BRASIL BLAMED GOVERNMENT FOR TSTUDENT CRISIS, SAYING THAT "BECAUSE OF LACK OF SPACE FOR NATIONAL POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, THE STUDENT UNIVERSE HAS NATURALLY BECOME THE FIELD FOR DISPUTES BETWEEN DIFFERENT

IDEAS AND TENDENCIES," AND ADDED THAT BASIS OF PROBLEM COULD BE FOUND IN "THE LACK OF PUBLIC LIBERTIES FOR ANY CITIZEN, WHATEVER HIS AGE OR OCCUPATION."

8. THE UNB SITUATION HAS COMMANDED HIGH-LEVEL GOB ATTENTION. GEN. HUGO ABREU, HEAD OF PRESIDENT'S MILITARY CABINET AND SECRETARY OF NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL(CNS), REPORTEDLY STAYED IN BRAZILIA TO ACCOMPANY DEVELOPMENTS AT UNB RATHER THAN TRAVEL TO MANAUS WITH GEISEL, AS HE WOULD CUSTOMARILY HAVE DONE. THE OCCUPATION OF THE UNIVERSITY WAS REPORTEDLY PERSONALLY DIRECTED BY FEDERAL DISTRICT SECRETARY OF PUBLIC SECURITY AND COMMANDANT OF MILITARY CONFIDENTIAL

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POLICE, BOTH OF THESE ACTUALLY PRESENT ON CAMPUS PART OF THE TIME. THE TWO AUTHORITIES ALSO REPORTEDLY MAINTAINED FREQUENT DIRECT CONTACT WITH MILITARY COMMANDER OF THE FEDERAL DISTRICT AS WELL AS WITH THE CNS.

9. COMMENT: THE UNIVERSITY SITUATION SEEMS SURE TO BECOME MORE AGGRAVATED WITH THE REOPENING OF OTHER FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES ON AUGUST 1. COL. MOACIR COELHO, SUPERINTENDANT OF THE FEDERAL POLICE, TOLD EMBOFFS SEVERAL WEEKS AGO THAT HE BELIEVED STUDENT SITUATION WOULD WORSEN IN AUGUST AND BECOME POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE BY YEAR-END. THIS THEME WAS ECHOED THIS WEEK BY UNB VICE-RECTOR MARCO ANTONIO RODRIGUES DIAS, WHO PREDICTED TO EMBOFF AS ESCALATING SPIRAL OF GOVERNMENT CRACKDOWN FOLLOWED BY FURTHER STUDENT REVULSION AND PROTESTS. HE SPECULATED THAT PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION POLITICS MIGHT BE INVOLVED IN THE DECISIONS TO EXPEL STUDENTS AND OCCUPY CAMPUS, RASONING THAT HARDLINE ELEMENTS MIGHT WANT TO CREATE CLIMATE OF INSTABILITY IN ORDER TO CALL FOR A

SEVERE CRACK-DOWN AND RETURN TO MORE REPRESSIVE STYLE OF GOVERNMENT.  
RECENT ARRESTS IN RIO (REFTEL) AND DECISION TO PROSECUTE  
14 UNB STUDENTS ARRESTED JULY 26-27 WOULD SEEM TO BEAR THIS OUT.

10. UNB STUDENTS THEMSELVES ARE DIVIDED: VIRTUALLY ALL OPPOSE  
PRESENCE OF POLICE ON CAMPUS, BUT MANY WHO SUPPORTED MAY-JUNE  
STRIKE ARE FEARFUL UNIVERSITY WILL BE RECESSED INDEFINITELY,  
CAUSING THEM IN EFFECT TO LOSE ACADEMIC YEAR. OTHERS INSIST THAT  
SOLIDARITY MUST BE MAINTAINED FOR THE SAKE OF THOSE EXPELLED AND  
ARRESTED. SHOULD BROAD-BASED SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT BE FORTHCOMING  
FROM UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN OTHER CITIES, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT  
LATTER GROUP WILL WIN OUT, FORCING GOVERNMENT TO EITHER TAKE  
EVEN MORE REPRESSIVE MEASURES OR ADMIT FAILURE AND AGAIN RECESS  
UNB.END COMMENT.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009